

## THE BIG BUILDUP

This is an edited and abbreviated transcript of a National Arts Journalism Program panel on the role of the arts in urban redevelopment held at Columbia University on March 6, 2000.

### Panelists:

*Diane Dalto* is the first deputy city representative for arts and culture in Philadelphia. She serves as the city's liaison to the arts community regarding Philadelphia's \$400 million Avenue of the Arts development project. Dalto is also the executive director of the Philadelphia Arts Commission, a review agency that addresses aesthetic issues including civic design, planning, public art and architecture.

*Kelley Lindquist* has been president of Artspace Projects, Inc. of Minneapolis since 1987. It has grown from a small, local nonprofit organization to one with assets of more than \$7 million. Artspace provides advisory services on the development of cultural space across the United States. It has developed more than \$50 million of real estate and owns almost 300 live/work units for artists and more than 800,000 square feet of space.

*Richard Pilbrow* is a leading theater design consultant, lighting designer, author and theater producer. His firm, Theatre Projects Consultants, Inc., with offices in London, Toronto, Connecticut, Los Angeles and Singapore, has worked on some 600 projects, including the National Theater of Great Britain, the New Amsterdam Theater on 42nd Street in New York, and the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles. He has won Tony nominations for lighting design, and has been twice recognized by the U.S. Institute of Theater Technology for his lifelong contributions to lighting and theater design.

*Sharon Zukin* holds the Broeklundian chair of sociology at Brooklyn College and the City University graduate school. An expert on urban sociology and public space, Zukin is the author of "The Culture of Cities," "Loft Living," and "Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World," which was awarded the C. Wright Mills Award in 1992.

### Moderators:

*John Habich* is the arts editor of the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*. He was a 1999-2000 National Arts Journalism Program Fellow.

*Jerome Weeks* is a book columnist and former theater critic of *The Dallas Morning News*. He was a 1999-2000 National Arts Journalism Program Fellow.

## Opening Remarks

John Habich: In Minneapolis, arts institutions play an especially important role in urban life because they give us something to do when it's too cold to do anything else. Like other American cities, ours has seen a wide variety of partnerships over the past several years among governments, real-estate developers and artists. St. Paul tried to reposition its moribund downtown by marketing a cultural corridor of museums and theaters. But no one actually used the area as a corridor and the effort fell flat. Minneapolis, in contrast, designated a warehouse arts district that proved so successful that rents rose beyond the reach of most artists, who moved across the river to instigate another cycle of revitalization. Even small, suburban Hopkins, Minn., tried to redefine its downtown by building a performing arts center on a former used-car lot. From Times Square to Disney Hall, from Pittsburgh to Galveston, cities are trying to infuse their cores with identity and consumer magnetism by drawing on cultural capital. Tonight's program aims to examine a wide variety of those efforts and the factors critical to their success.

Jerome Weeks: When John and I were first discussing this panel, we decided we wanted to open it with some visual presentations. First, we felt that underneath their cosmopolitan veneer, New Yorkers are famously and happily provincial. In discussing the arts and urban renewal, the conversation always turned to Times Square and, to some extent, Lincoln Center. The problem with this is that Times Square is essentially an anomaly in American urban development when it comes to the arts. Most cities do not have Disney, ABC-Capital Cities, MTV, pouring hundreds of millions of dollars into a few street-corners. So we wanted to start with visual presentations to give us a vocabulary to discuss this issue, because it's happening all over the United States.

We also wanted to give an idea of the scope: we're talking billions of dollars. Yet there seems to be very little national consciousness of what's going on. And I daresay that this is the biggest boom in arts facilities since the Beaux Arts era a century ago that produced landmarks like Carnegie Hall and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

We'll begin with one city's experience, Philadelphia, then we'll move to a different kind of arts center, and finally get a national view of some of these larger arts avenues and arts districts.

Diane Dalto: Philadelphia's Avenue of the Arts is a \$400 million city-led effort to create an arts district. Our City Hall sits at the center of North and South Broad Street. I'm going to talk about South Broad Street, even though there is an Avenue of the Arts planned for North Broad Street. It's a one-mile stretch of four-lane roadway that for the first half mile is some of the most upscale real estate in the city, with hotels, restaurants, some arts organizations, and retail. The last half mile looks like bombed-out Beirut: failed hospitals, failed senior-citizens' homes, empty lots. We just took down three high-rise subsidized housing buildings. The street, in one block, goes from some of the highest-priced real estate to the worst. This is an effort to extend some of the prosperity of Center City an additional half mile south.

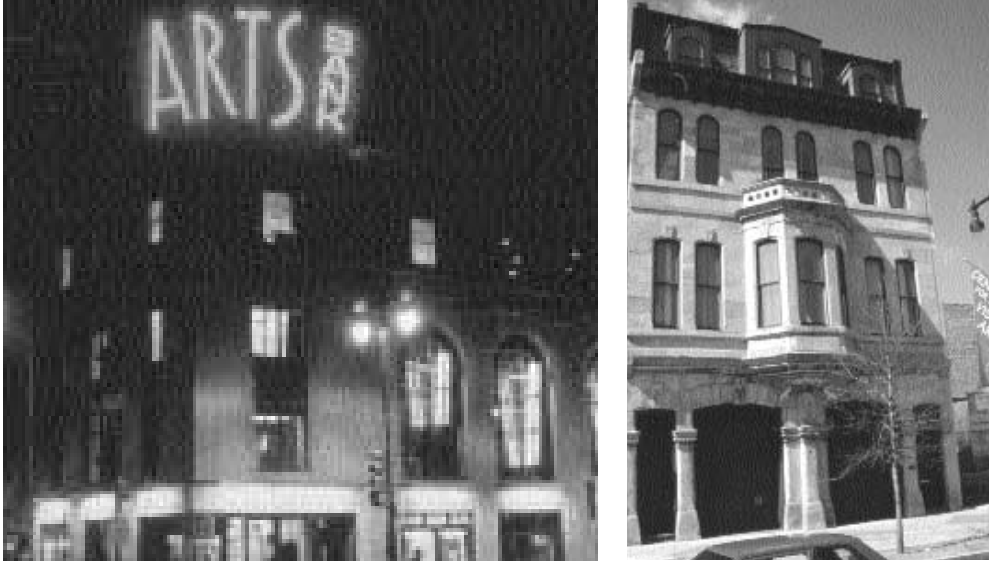


(Above) South Broad Street, the Avenue of the Arts, is quite extensively built. We spent about \$15 million on a new streetscape, including new sidewalks and light poles. We have banners that change with the seasons and with the openings of venues up and down the boulevard. The Academy of Music is the anchor of the avenue. It was built 140 years ago, and it's the only remaining grand opera house in the United States. Richard Pilbrow is involved in the design of a new hall, which will house our orchestra, and it will go back to its original use as an opera house.



(Above, left) The Miriam Theater is owned by the University of the Arts, which is one of the main landholders on the Avenue of the Arts. It was renovated about ten years ago. It was a commercial theater, now it's a nonprofit theater.

(Above, right) Wilma Theater is a regional theater. It has been around for about 35 years. It's probably our highest-profile regional theater.



(Above, left) This arts bank, an old bank building south of the prosperous area, is a multi-use black box [theater].

(Above, right) The Brandywine workshop is an African-American graphics workshop, the oldest in the country. It has visiting professorships, does a lot of work in the schools, and has a very active gallery and archives in an old firehouse.



(Above, left) The Clef Club, originally the black musicians' union in Philadelphia, is now a jazz club, archives and performance space.

(Above, right) This ballet rehearsal and office space is situated in an old car dealership.



(Above, left) This is the Regional Performing Arts Center, under construction. It accounts for over \$230 million of the entire price tag for the street.

(Above, right) These two light towers made of holographic glass are the public-art component of the Avenue of the Arts. It's a \$500,000 light show. They're lit from the interior at night, but during the day, the sun moving across the sky changes the colors of the towers. They're 44 feet high, a gateway to the avenue.



(Above) This is our Old City artists' district, which actually happened absent city leadership. It's the oldest part of the city: narrow streets, buildings that had been small industrial warehouses and distributorships for hundreds of years. In the past ten years, 45 art galleries have opened and 70 restaurants, and there is a burgeoning small-retail business—not mall business—moving in, which makes us very happy.

About every third building still maintains its industrial use. There are machine companies, equipment companies, packaging companies, wholesale distributors.

(Below, left) As in any successful district, it offers a big converted warehouse of apartments for young professionals. Lots of little cafes and upscale furniture shops are also moving into the bigger industrial spaces. The Delaware River Port Authority has been building parking under a bridge, because it's at a premium there. That's one of the things the government has been able to do to help, converting unused space to parking lots.

(Below, right) This is the example of an arts development gone haywire. The South Street area developed as an artist colony over 40 years ago when the city was threatening to raze the entire part of the city to build exit and entrance ramps to I-95. Artists moved into recently vacated industrial buildings and set up camp there and became a political force that has kept the street alive and kept ramps from being built there. For about 20 years, it was a wonderful arts center, with galleries, restaurants, great little retail shops. About 15 years ago, it became so attractive that the Gap moved in, and Tower Records, and mall shops, which quickly led to its deterioration, and today, it is actually becoming dangerous. It's on a steep decline. It's now home to tattoo parlors and check cashing agencies, and most of the art galleries and restaurants have moved out.



Kelley Lindquist: I am very worried about arts developments that occur where the artists attract other businesses, and after a while, the artists have to leave. From an economic-development point of view, the artists and arts activities should have a permanent home. Artspace, the organization I work for, is a nonprofit that tries to make sure that such development is constantly affordable for the artist community. Because that's really what keeps the vitality and attracts those other businesses to be there, so that it doesn't go downhill.

Artspace was founded by the City of Minneapolis in 1979, and I started working there in 1987. They gave me the title of president, but I was also janitor, secretary and everything else, because I was the only employee. At that time, Artspace did not own any buildings, but our mission was and is "to create and manage space where artists can live, work, perform, exhibit and conduct business." We've really carried this idea quite far around the country and we're growing rapidly. We now have 28 employees and we have developed

and own about \$60 million worth of property across the country. We believe very much in that theory of giving the arts community a home.



(Above) I hired my first employee in 1987, and we took on one of the larger buildings in Lowertown, St. Paul that was empty, a 150,000-square-foot building. For the first time in U.S. history, we used the low-income tax credit form to create affordable housing for low-income artists and their families. We had to work with the IRS to prove that one can use federal dollars and discriminate by profession. So we were able to reject applicants who were not truly artists. We had a for-profit partner at first because we didn't think we knew what we were doing, but it turned out sadly that neither did he. We actually ended up bringing the money together and then we bought out the for-profit developer. Now Northern Warehouse is a permanent home for the arts. It has 52 artist families in it as well as about 50,000 square feet of commercial space. So we created spaces of about 1,700 or 1,800 square feet, where you could bring up your family as well as have space to do your artwork.

We've found over time that it's important that we build into the deal—from the start—significant space the artists can use for themselves, that they do not have to get any income off of. That helps keep the artist community alive.



(Above) Artspace is very political. In fact, I made a deal with a couple of City Council members, that if they would vote for me to get the final money to

complete the Northern Warehouse, we would work on a building in a neighborhood in St. Paul called Frogtown, a very troubled area. So we bought this building and created 36 units of affordable housing for artists and their families. A lesson that I'm facing in Chicago is that if you're going to create a place, make sure that you market and serve the artists in that immediate neighborhood.

I did not need to go to Minneapolis to find the many artists who were right within the Frogtown neighborhood. In fact, I'm outright offended by some of the foundations in Chicago that say, "We don't think your project in Garfield Park in Chicago is really going to work, because we don't think the artists are there." The artists are there.



(Above) Tilsner is another big warehouse that was just about to be torn down. Once we had finished, it was a beautiful, beautiful building. For about 10 years, it had Minnesota snow and winter going through it. The City of St. Paul was about to tear it down for a parking lot. We convinced them that we could do it. It turned out to be about a \$9 million project where 66 artist families live and work, again appealing to artists from all backgrounds and of all disciplines, whether dance or singing or filmmaking or painting.



(Above) This beautiful building was built originally as the National Biscuit Company in 1886. Again, it was threatened with demolition. It was empty. We



bought it. We got 25 mid-career visual artists together who wanted workspace only, they were just sick and tired of being kicked out from space to space, and they wanted to have an ownership position. So this is not a live/work building, this one is workspace only. The 25 artists designed their own studio space. They put a lot of their own money in the deal. I raised about \$4 or \$5 million in order to renovate the building. We used a lot of city money, got yelled at by a lot of City Council members, and created beautiful working spaces which, in this case, were discipline-specific. They took about half of the building. The rest of the building, we had to fill with prime-rate businesses, commercial activities, and that took a couple of years. It was kind of threatening Artspace's position, because we invested some of our own money in this deal to make it work. Now that time has gone by and the building is filled and prosperous, it's pumping money back into Artspace.



(Above) Back in Minneapolis, we were given the old Masonic temple, which was already working as an arts center. We worked hard to equalize the rents and attract some more arts organizations. Now it's full. It's called the Hennepin Center for the Arts. It's primarily a dance center.

(Opposite, top left) In Portland, Oregon, about 40 artists' families were about to be evicted by the for-profit building owner. He was getting older and wanted to make some money, and the area where the artists had been had attracted a lot of business so the building was worth a lot of money. Rather than disrupt that community of artists that was working so well, the City of Portland worked with us to raise the money for Artspace to own it, to make sure that those families could stay there permanently.

(Opposite, top right) This is the end-product in Pittsburgh of a building that we partnered with, a nonprofit called Artists in Cities, and created another 39 units where artists could live or work. It filled up right away. It used to be a car showcase building where they drove the car right up to the top of the building. So we kept the driveway in there and it made a lot of interesting space for the artists to use.



(Below, left) The City of Reno, Nev. gave us one of the last older buildings in Reno. Most of the buildings in Reno are really crass casinos. And this beautiful building was along the river coming out of the Sierra Nevada mountains, so it's been a beautiful job. We've just completed our financing and we're in the middle of construction in that building.

(Below, right) Back in Minneapolis, we lifted the heaviest building ever to be moved on wheels in history. We lifted the Schubert Theater, built in 1910, which was to be torn down for a mall-like construction project. The city promised it would raze the block by a certain date, but the people of Minneapolis got sick of the fact that every old building was being torn down. So the city actually paid to move it. Artspace asked that it be moved next to that beautiful Hennepin Center for the Arts, and I'm now raising \$25 million to restore the theater and build a link building between it and the Hennepin Center and create a new dance center for the Upper Midwest there.



Richard Pilbrow: I'm going to talk about the big end of arts development. I earn my living doing that. I come from Europe, and I get quite distressed sometimes that American cities don't have some of the charm that 1,000 years seem to have produced in Europe. What is downtown living about but an environment that is conducive to relaxation, fun, culture, and entertainment?

In his book “Cities and Civilizations,” Sir. Peter Hall talks about the great cities of the world and how some of them spawned some extraordinary artistic activity. He took examples of moments in human history that produced astonishing creativity for very brief periods of time: Ancient Greece (500-400 B.C.), Elizabethan England (1570-1620 A.D.), Renaissance Florence (1400-1500 A.D.), Vienna (1780-1910 A.D.), Paris (1870-1910 A.D.), and Berlin (1918-1933 A.D.). But what happened to produce this extraordinary creativity?

These cities were growing very rapidly. They were in periods of tremendous change. There was a whole new affluence. Rich people could afford to subsidize artists, they could become patrons, and the artists were nearly always outsiders. What has all that got to do with our modern American world? We’ve got a vastly bigger population, we’re all getting fatter with affluence, change is bewildering and upon us, we have apparently universal education, and we’re all dazzled by what the Web is doing. Does that mean that our future is going to be in these dreadful cities that we built across America in the ‘60s, or is there another way?



(Above, left) Theaters in England and America have always been associated with commerce. America built a lot of opera houses in the 18th and 19th centuries. They were nearly always behind a saloon, or on top of a bank, or in a shopping area. Broadway, we all know, is commercial, but it always was, and the West End in London, too: The theaters were behind shops. And inside these commercial spaces are these charming little spaces that have to do with space for artistic and intimate communications.

In the 1960s, something seemed to turn very peculiar in our buildings for the arts. We started to build them outside cities, and the arts center began to be seen as a fortress or a shrine. We’ve got these great temples of culture such as the Kennedy Center and the Los Angeles Music Center. They’re huge, barren places, covered in glitter to match the dresses of the ladies who go on opening nights.

(Opposite, right) We've got one in New York, Lincoln Center, set in the Upper West Side, which was pretty barren at the time. It cost \$140 million to build, and in the 1980s was bringing about \$30 million a year in revenue. They've had to rebuild the concert halls, and this year, they've decided it's going to cost \$1.3 billion to upgrade them to modern standards. So the dead hand of modernism has not done us much good. The granite center is an amazingly unfriendly place to visit.

After the horrible '60s, we began to discover that that wasn't what living in cities should be about. Boston and Baltimore both set a pattern for a more livable environment. In the '60s, everyone seemed to leave downtown and rush to suburbia to find a nice place for the children. But it's different now. In the '90s, people started coming back downtown. There's increased polarization. There's the "childless affluent," students and gay people living downtown, but alongside very poor families with children. It's produced a strange phenomenon that we've talked about in Philadelphia: The old downtown is turning into "Old Pasadena." Ye Olde Towne Westport, Connecticut, has turned into this old, quaint town, and the Gap and the Banana Republic have taken it over. It's not exactly the dream we all had for these downtown areas, and in fact it's turned into a marketing ploy.

Under New York City Mayor John Lindsay's regime—one of the first groups of people to come up with the idea that the arts have a lot of leverage—they put together the whole plan with the commercial theaters which were built in high-rise buildings. They put together the Museum of Modern Art development. They started off the South Street Seaport, and actually laid the foundations of the revitalized 42nd Street, because they leveraged the value that arts can bring to commerce.

All these projects entailed financial mechanisms of sponsorship, air rights and all that stuff. The Selwyn Theater announced it's changing its name to the American Airlines Theater, which some of us in the theatrical profession are somewhat offended by. There are (many) ways you can leverage the value of the arts to raise money. The first thing that seemed to happen around the country was utilizing the assets already in place. In Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Indianapolis, Louisville, St. Louis, and Salt Lake City, they took old movie palaces and turned them into modern, big performing arts centers and often built new stuff next door.

Who goes to the arts? Well, it's more people than one might think. There are theories that more people go to the arts than go to sports events. A 1997 N.E.A. survey of public participation in the arts suggested that 97 million people had attended these arts activities in 12 months, a quarter of them to musicals, and that's an awful lot of people. According to the American Arts Alliance, the not-for-profit arts generate \$37 billion—\$3.4 billion in federal taxes, a lot of people work. The National Endowment for the Arts (N.E.A.) costs us all 36 cents a year, but the surveys have said, bottom line, Americans are actually willing to pay up to \$5. What a pity they don't. To a lot of people's surprise, a

lot of young people think the theater's quite cool. According to the Theatre Development Fund, under-20 attendance to Broadway shows grew from 4.9 percent in 1965 to 13.9 percent in 1997. A Theatre Development Fund study done in 1998 found that 27 million go to Broadway theater, 60 percent come from outside New York. The growth of nonprofit theaters has been enormous, as well as symphonies and opera.

<b>Attendance at Arts Events</b>		
<b>Arts Activity</b>	<b>% of Adults Attending at Least Once in Last 12 Months</b>	<b>Number of Adults Attending (millions)<sup>1</sup></b>
Attended:		
Jazz Performance	11.9%	23.3
Classical Music	15.6%	30.5
Opera	4.7%	9.2
Musical Play	24.5%	47.9
Non-Musical Play	15.8%	30.9
Ballet	5.8%	1.3
Other Dance <sup>2</sup>	12.4%	24.3

<sup>1</sup> The number of attenders was computed by multiplying the attendance rate by 195.6 million--the U.S. resident non-institutionalized population, 18 years of age and over in 1997 (from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Study, March 1997).

<sup>2</sup> "Other Dance" refers to dance other than ballet including modern, folk, and tap.

Source: National Endowment for the Arts, 1997 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts

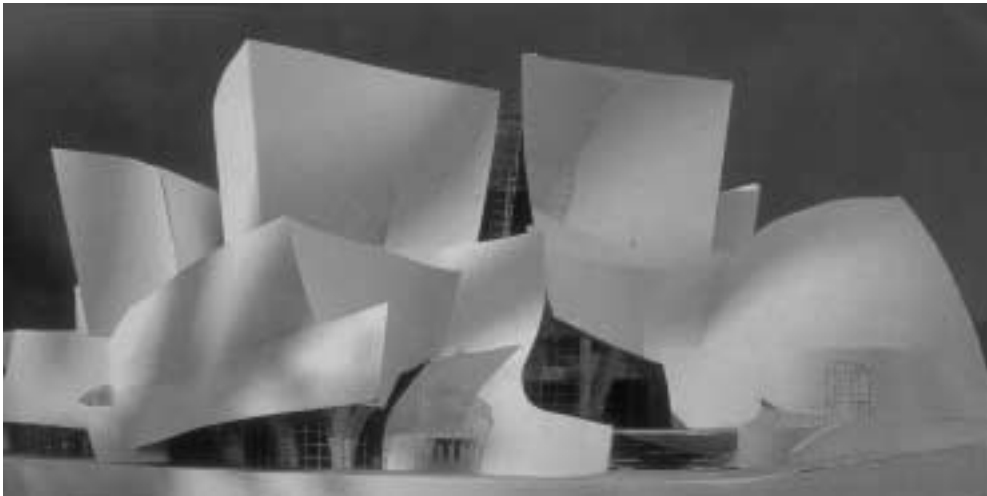
But there are some snags. According to an N.E.A. study, (Demographic Differences in Arts Attendance: 1982-1992): Baby Boomers don't go as much as their parents. Classical music attendance is down, opera is down, ballet's pretty good, musicals are a little down, jazz is very good, and theater is very good. But the audience is getting older, and will die off unless something happens.

Another serious challenge is that the bloody Brits came and took over Broadway. It's little known that in 1993, 75 cents of every dollar that crossed the box offices of American commercial theater went to England. Cameron MacKintosh and Andrew Lloyd Webber are some of the richest men in Britain. But their hit shows are all closing now. "Phantom of the Opera" is 15 years old. What is going to happen when there's no product like that around? Theater is turning very commercial. SFX was founded only in 1998. They control 55 percent of the Broadway theaters across the country. They're a huge corporation. They announced last week they're selling themselves for \$3.3 billion. Unfortunately, SFX has never done a creative show. They just buy other people's product. There's a little hope from the Disney organization. They've had some tremendous successes. They've never made any money doing it, and we all hope their munificence continues. But there's a real shortage of big-scale product. A story in *Variety* said theaters are becoming empty. Chicago has six large theaters, only one was open. Pittsburgh, five large theaters, only one was lit. And a new arts complex in Wisconsin had nothing from Broadway. So with the good news, there's bad news.

What's been built? In the '90s, Charlotte, N.C. spent \$40 million on a complex, as well as owning Ovens Auditorium, which is a large place for Broadway touring shows, and a small Spirit Square, which has four auditoriums for small work. Cincinnati built, Seattle built, Fort Worth built, Newark built, San Francisco restored and built. Toronto built a commercial theater, built an art center that, with the collapse of Livent—another symbol of the product problem—is now empty. Missisauqua built a most interesting arts center, because it's not a place where you just go and look at somebody else's work. You go and do the art yourself. And in California, a theater was built for just under \$60 million that changes its form, thus hopefully protecting itself from the shortage of product. Interestingly, Japan built dozens of theaters—I picked one book this morning that listed 28 of them. The Tokyo Forum cost \$1.5 billion, which is a five-auditorium complex. Most of these theaters across Japan sit empty, because they haven't invested in software.

Could this be a problem facing America, one wonders? In construction at the moment: Philadelphia we touched on—\$230 million for this large glass roof and two theaters inside it, and a concert hall for the Philadelphia orchestra. In Chicago they've restored a host of theaters; there's a new theater with two auditoriums for the Goodman in construction at the moment. Columbus, Ga. is spending \$60 million on a new arts center.

(Below) In Los Angeles, the Disney Concert Hall, Frank Gehry's astonishing building, is a 2,400-seat auditorium for only \$200 million.



Hollywood and Highland, a huge development costing over \$300 million, has a theater in which the Academy Awards are going to be presented. In Miami; Orange County, Calif.; Madison, Wis.; New York; Omaha, Neb.; Raleigh-Durham, N.C.; and Plano, Texas, there are projects in preparation. In early stages of study, there are also projects in Orlando, Kansas City, St. Louis, and New Haven, Conn.

(Below) In Dallas, the Arts District is probably the biggest project in the country. It started in the '70s and was a complete failure. A bond issue failed and all sorts of other things happened, and the value of the land leapt up. But they did build a museum of modern art and the Meyerson Symphony Center, and this has been a fantastic success. There are plans for building an opera house, a theater center, a children's theater, a black dance theater, for another \$300 million, and it's filling out the east end of the arts district, a lot of mixed-use development and a new millennium square in the middle of it. Hopefully, it will be just like Venice.



In summary, this extraordinary boom may be the biggest such boom in human history. The construction of hardware in the '90s: \$850 million. The things that I know about in construction and design: \$1.8 billion. In study: \$2.2 billion, adding up to just under \$5 billion. Astounding.

But how does it become livable and practical, and how do we have American cities with the charm of those in Europe? Cultural product has got to be found. You don't just build the buildings. One of the wonderful things that culture brings to the world of the Gap and the Banana Republic is that it's one of the only authentic things that's going on. The work the artists do is actually authentic. You've got to control these mixed-use developments carefully. Hopefully, the architecture is of a human scale and avoids grandiosity and sterility. And hopefully, artists from the community are actually

**EXAMPLES OF DEVELOPMENT**

**SAMPLER: 1980s**

**Tulsa, Oklahoma**

- Tulsa Performing Arts Center

**Houston, Texas**

- Wortham Opera

**Tampa Bay, Florida**

- Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center

**Eugene, Oregon**

- Hult Center

**Denver, Colorado**

- Denver Center for the Arts

**Portland, Oregon**

- Performing Arts Center

**SAMPLER: 1990s**

**Charlotte, North Carolina**

- Blumenthal Performing Arts Center (\$40 million)
- Ovens Auditorium
- Spirit Square

**Fort Worth, Texas**

- Bass Performing Arts Center (\$60 million)

**Toronto, Canada**

- Princess of Wales (\$C25 million)
- North York Performing Arts Center (\$C40 million)
- Mississauga Living Arts Center (\$C30 million )
- Ballet Opera House (Cancelled at C\$320 million New project at C\$130 million)

**Cincinnati, Ohio**

- Aronoff Performing Arts Center (\$70 million)

**Newark, New Jersey**

- New Jersey Performing Arts Center (\$150 million)

**San Francisco, California**

- Geary Theatre restoration
- Symphony Hall renovation
- Yuerba Buena

**Cerritos, California**

- Performing Arts Center (\$55 million)

**Seattle, Washington**

- Benaroya Symphony Hall (\$85 million)
- Leo K Theater (\$8 million)

**IN CONSTRUCTION**

**Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

- The Avenue of the Arts
- Performing Arts Center (\$230 million)  
Concert Hall  
Recital Theatre
- The Academy
- Wilma Theatre

**Chicago, Illinois**

- Oriental restoration
- Chicago (Disney) restoration
- Goodman Theatre (Two new theaters—\$48 million)

**Los Angeles, California**

- Walt Disney Concert Hall (\$209 million)
- Hollywood & Highland
- Premiere Theatre (\$75 million)
- Major mixed-use development (MXD \$310 million)

**Columbus, Georgia**

- Arts Center
- Columbus State University (\$60 million)

**IN DESIGN (2000)**

**Miami, Florida**

- Opera House
- Concert Hall
- Studio Theatre (\$225 million)

**Madison, Wisconsin**

- 3-theater complex (\$150 million)

**Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina**

- North Carolina Institute of the Performing Arts Raleigh/Durham (\$150 million)

**Orange County, California**

- 200-acre mixed-use development
- Segerstrom Hall
- New concert hall (\$200 million)
- New South Coast Repertory

**New York, New York**

- Jazz @ Lincoln Center (\$150 million)

**Dayton, Ohio**

- Mixed-use development  
One theater (\$75 million)

**Omaha, Nebraska**

- New concert theater and renovation of movie palace (\$75 million)

**Plano, Texas**

- New complex (\$45 million)

**IN PRELIMINARY STUDY**

**Orlando, Florida**

- 5-theater complex
- Mixed-use development
- University of Central Florida (\$150 million)

**St. Louis, Missouri**

- Cultural Masterplan

**Dallas, Texas**

- Dallas Museum of Modern Art
- Meyerson Symphony Center
- Dallas Performing Arts Center  
Dallas Opera House  
Dallas Theatre Center  
Dallas Children's Theatre  
Dallas Black Dance Theatre (\$300 million)
- Millennium Square

**Kansas City, Kansas**

- 2/3-theater complex (\$300 million)

**New Haven, Connecticut**

- Cultural Masterplan



involved. So there is an audience out there. I'd like to suggest they're not just spectators for some tired Broadway hit, but that they're participating in creating the work themselves.

And the culture can be a catalyst in making towns work. But it's got to be part of something else. It's got to have critical mass. It's got to match real need and appeal to a real cross-section of the community. Because that's what it's about. Community is the essence of live performance, and it's the essence of living, and you want food, drink, kids, etc., all part of it. Culture in a vacuum doesn't work. It's got to be part of something bigger.

**CULTURAL PRODUCT HAS GOT TO BE FOUND.  
YOU DON'T JUST BUILD THE BUILDINGS.**

### **Panel Discussion**

**Weeks:** What's driving all this? We're talking about billions of dollars being spent on cultural facilities, at the same time that on the national political level, the N.E.A. is mired in a stalemate. And yet on the city and state level, people are spending all this money on cultural facilities. Arts organizations are being treated as if they were sports arenas. They're the new economic engines. Twenty years ago, if you proposed this sort of thing, many people would have looked at you as either visionary or crazy. What changed?

**Dalto:** When I took my job eight years ago, I asked the then-new mayor what he thought of the Avenue of the Arts project. It had been discussed for about 15 years but had not been acted upon. And he said, "It's a great idea, but it's not going to happen in our lifetimes." And three months later, he had signed on. Pure and simple, he saw it as a way to revitalize downtown Philadelphia. Residents were moving out, retail was closing, department stores were closing. He saw the arts not only as a way to fill the space, but to attract back those affluent people who had moved to the suburbs, to attract affluence-oriented businesses. To a certain degree it has worked, but it was purely driven on reinventing the reason for a city. Philadelphia was losing its reason for being.

**Weeks:** Sharon, in your book, "The Culture of Cities," you touch on some of the things that led to this. You cite cultural tourism, you also cite the growth of the festival marketplace. These were other attempts to revitalize downtowns on a commercial basis.

**Zukin:** A couple of the speakers touched on one of the very interesting paradoxical elements of arts development over the past 40 years. That is, that some of

the most successful arts development are unplanned. What we've found in New York is that the arts are encouraged on a temporary basis, usually to raise real-estate values, and almost never to create jobs or to create an economic base for artists' self-sufficiency.

But the arts succeed despite the best intentions of political leaders. Before I ever started doing research on how artists' lofts became a hot real-estate commodity, I wrote a little piece that *The New York Times* published, saying that there should be absolutely no government intervention in this area: Just let these things take their course, which is not usually my position in politics. But the most significant examples of arts districts seem to be led by nonprofit organizations or by a combination of artists and small retail spaces.

Weeks: In your book, as is true of Diane's anecdote about Philadelphia—you said that many times the cultural strategy is a strategy of desperation.

Zukin: That's exactly right. It's an interim strategy. In Times Square, for example, which so many people think is so successful and so terrible, the arts institutions and the for-profit theaters were conceived of in the late 1980s as an interim strategy. In fact, what we see in a very short time is the success of the long-term strategy, which was to build high-rise office buildings on the four corners of 42nd Street and Broadway. That goal has been wildly exceeded in that short period of time, but for a unique reason. That has to do with the expansion of multinational media corporations and their attempt to find a North American headquarters in New York and build on New York's traditional media base.

Weeks: In your book, you talk about the culture industry, and for you, that's everything from restaurants to Sony DVD players, with ballet and everything else in between. When I think of these arts districts outside of New York, I'm thinking of nonprofits that are considered large in their communities if they have an annual budget of more than \$7 million. Looked at one way, many of these new developments must be making these artists ecstatic: The arts organizations are now being seen as major players on the urban scene, they're being treated seriously by politicians. On the other hand—again, we're not talking about the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Goliaths—what the cities are saying, in effect, to the ballet company is, "We've renovated this lovely building for you, now save downtown." Is that an incredible burden to place on a nonprofit?

Lindquist: The City of St. Paul did go too far. About seven years ago, they proposed this "Cultural Corridor" that was supposed to save the business energy of downtown St. Paul. I kept saying to the mayor and the city council members, "The arts are not going to save this city. It has to be part of a much larger activity."

Dalto: The South Broad Street Avenue of the Arts has not been terribly successful in saving Center City. It's been a part of it, but it has not attracted anywhere

near the amount of cultural development that was hoped for eight years ago. It has brought a lot of panache to Center City. Real-estate values, upscale condominium sales have skyrocketed in recent years. However, it hasn't really progressed beyond that half-mile.

The other area, Old City, is not based on arts organizations and great big performing venues. It's based on artists themselves. The development has been much smaller, some could say more successful than the Avenue of the Arts. In the past five years, an estimated 5,000 new jobs have been added to that neighborhood because of the arts and subsequent retail and restaurant development.

Zukin: There's an interesting question about where the markets for the different forms of art come from. What Diane and Richard are saying, perhaps, is that the market for performances of all kinds is much greater than the market for buying the work of visual artists. That's an interesting question: What is being sold? Not "What product?" but "What kind of labor is being sold in the arts?"

In a market economy, the goal of support of the arts is to enable artists to support themselves, in some way, economically. So the number of people who might be involved in creating and producing a performance can live on the number of consumers of performances. But the number of people who will consume on a paying basis the work of *living* artists might actually be small. We know that the number of people who go to art museums is large and is growing every year. I myself made the mistake of going to the Metropolitan Museum of Art the Sunday of President's weekend. There were hundreds of people crammed into the lobby, standing in long lines to buy tickets. It was jammed, the way the big art palaces are often jammed these days. And yet, how many people are buying the work of *living* artists to support the sorts of spaces that Artspace is setting up?

Weeks: You had a skeptical line in your book: "When these sorts of spaces succeed, they're generally seen as a sign of the genius of the marketplace. When they fail, they're seen as the failed intervention of the government."

Zukin: That's generally true in our society. When something succeeds, it's because of the marketplace. When something fails, it's because the government stepped in. When I wrote that, I didn't realize that it is a general condition of our society. Local governments so far haven't really been held over the coals for creating what might be called "non-economic art spaces," even though there might be these big behemoths like Avery Fisher Hall that cost a lot more to overhaul than what they bring in. It's interesting that the accountability of government so far hasn't extended to its support of the arts.

Weeks: Richard and Kelley, when someone approaches you with a project in mind, what factors do you look for? What are the elements necessary to make you think that this is something you want to sign off on?

Pilbrow: The first thing is, do they really want it?

Weeks: Civic will, in a sense?

Pilbrow: It's often civic will, but is there a real need for it? Nearly always, they want more than they probably should build. Most of these projects tend to be too large. All these towns want a theater for "Phantom of the Opera." Now, they forget that "Phantom of the Opera" is 15 years old and there's nothing in sight following it up. But they want this hall to do "Phantom of the Opera," which they might get for one week every other year. They forget there are 365 days to the year, and the rest of the time they're going to have a certain amount of middle-of-the-road entertainers. A lot of the time, it will be their own opera or ballet company. What happens is that their own opera and ballet company may be very worthy, but patrons find themselves sitting there with 1,000 seats empty all around them. And the local perception is then, "Well, our opera isn't very good."

It's a huge dilemma, because they will only get the big, popular stuff if they have a lot of seats, they will only make money by having those big popular things, and yet what happens to the local activity? It's an ongoing argument on every project, and we always try to edge them toward modesty whenever we can.

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Lindquist: Artspace's energy has a lot to do with providing a permanent space for marginalized groups that otherwise wouldn't have a chance. So it's a very different approach. What brought me to Galveston, Texas, for example, was a group of smaller arts organizations there that had heard of Artspace in the National Trust information. They really wanted us. They even came up to visit me in Minneapolis, so I thought, "They must really be serious!" I have to have a spiritual partner in the city that is going to fight as hard as I will, and really believes that the community needs the project.

But then I go through a checklist: "Is the financing available, or is it just a dream? Is it going to work over the long run? Do the pro formas work out? Do they make sense to us, who've been in the business for a long time, that this isn't going to be something that drains the community of money avail-

able? Is it really going to be used? Do arts organizations have enough stability, or vision?" I have to get into all of that stuff. When it comes to the building itself—sometimes we do new construction, but usually it's restoration or renovation—does that building really have the beauty that would be conducive to artists? So we say no a lot more than we say yes. Every community is so different. I have to put on different hats when I work in different cities, to make sure that what we're being asked to do there really fits for that community.

Weeks: Richard, I've heard you speak about the factors in the interior design of a theater that enhance an audience experience, that make an audience become an audience: things like box seats connecting the lower orchestra levels with the mezzanines and balconies, so that people can actually hear laughter travel back and forth. With all these projects, do we have any idea of external factors that help draw an audience, other than "It's an attractive building"? Things like plazas, number of doors. . . When you look at someone's plan, can you say, "No, you've neglected this, you need to put this in"?

**MOST OF THESE PROJECTS TEND TO BE TOO LARGE. ALL THESE TOWNS WANT A THEATER FOR "PHANTOM OF THE OPERA." THEY FORGET THAT THERE'S NOTHING IN SIGHT FOLLOWING IT UP.**

Pilbrow: I touched on my dislike of so many aspects of modernism. I do indeed think that the only reason to go out to the theater or to ballet or to music is to meet with other people and share the experience, so we are all into three-dimensional exciting theater spaces. But how they relate to the city and to the environment around the building is of equal importance. They've got to fit into the urban fabric and be fun. We always forcefully try to push people into including restaurants and cafes—anything, indeed, to entertain people aside from the actual show. A good theater is into all sorts of stuff, like food and drink. It's part of the whole experience. In the National Theatre in England, they have several restaurants, cafes and bars, they earn 25 percent of their gross revenue from sales outside ticket sales. That's very good news, because it takes the pressure off the artists to an extent. Making them fun and relaxing and enjoyable is very fundamental.

Weeks: Peter Brook, in his landmark work on the theater, "The Empty Space," talks about the arts needing mud to grow. He talks about the mud being things like the T-shirt shop, or the vendor selling coffee, that the arts don't survive in a pristine environment. But just how commercial can you get before it starts being crass? Do you get a negative response after a certain level where people are turned off?

Pilbrow: We haven't met that yet. The Royal National Theatre in Great Britain isn't known for being crassly commercial, but I've just told you how much of its revenue it earns by being crassly commercial. I think you can do these things with whatever taste is appropriate to the community.

Weeks: There are few things, I suppose, that are more commercialized or crass than Broadway and 42nd Street, and yet it still draws a crowd.

I interviewed Paul Goldberger [architecture critic] about Dallas once. I was asking him about the facilities there and his response to them. One of the things that bothered me about the facilities is that they've increasingly been designed to suit suburban audiences. The Meyerson Symphony Hall, designed by I.M. Pei, is actually designed for car drivers, so that the real entrance is from the underground parking garage. What this leads to is that suburbanites drive in, enter, drive out; they never enter the city. They might as well live in a tube, go straight to the Meyerson and then drive out. And the museum has followed suit.

We started talking about the city becoming the entertainment park, the theme park. He said, "Better the downtown than the suburbs." Is there any downside to the cities becoming entertainment parks?

Zukin: Before you get to that question of the downside, it's worth saying that we still don't know what the distributional effects of these big downtown entertainment spaces are. In other words, does the city's population, which may be a low-income, ethnic minority population, benefit, and how does it benefit, from various kinds of arts facilities downtown and within its borders?

One question has to do with who are the consumers of the arts. But another question has to do with the jobs created. No study has been done, as far as I know, of the sorts of jobs created for both artists and non-artists in arts districts, performing arts facilities, complexes, art galleries and museums.

It may well be that the art field in general, for both artists and non-artists, is yet another example of the winner-take-all society. In other words, you have a distributional pyramid, with a very small number of highly paid creators, whether they're producers or performers, at the top, and the bottom is filled by the security guards and the vendors and the people who clean up after the audience has gone or the crowds have left the gallery or the museum. This is extremely important, because we know next to nothing about the careers of artists of various kinds, and we know nothing about the kinds of economic benefits that accrue to cities as producers of the arts.

Weeks: In your book, you talk about how a city, if it controls its image, particularly its cultural image, is seen as energetic. It's seen as a place for other investments if the culture of that city becomes a selling point. So it seems that's one of the reasons for the "economic engine" aspect of the arts in the past ten to 15 years.

Zukin: There is, in general, a hierarchy of cities around the world according to their control or their share of the high-class business activities. It used to be corporate headquarters, now it's financial services. Similarly, there's a hierarchy of cities around the world in terms of the arts, let's say, the number of alpha-list art museums that a city might have, the number of debuts or initiations of different sorts of arts activities, the number of artists who live in a city, who exhibit in a city, the number of exhibition spaces. The visual arts are actually at the top of the arts pyramid in terms of the interest they generate on the part of mass audiences and city governments.

And every city tries to imitate the other city, every neighborhood tries to imitate the other neighborhoods. If one city has an art museum, then the other city has to have an art museum. So there's a lot of imitation going on, not as a form of flattery, but as a form of economic competition. So the engine that is driving this arts development is, in part, the engine fueled by the hope that there will be economic benefits from this arts activity. On the other hand, one of the reasons there is so much local government interest in the arts is as a means of shoring up the image of each city. It's another form of competition.

Weeks: It's another form of control, too. Much of the thinking that has gone into business improvement districts and culture centers is based on Disney World, the idea of preserving safety and controlling the public space. I find that chilling, although my daughter doesn't.

Lindquist: On your point about "when does it get too crass?" That's always going to be a real challenge. When I was working at the Guthrie Theater, before Artspace, I helped develop a gift shop there. And as I was doing that, responding more to the business aspect of the Guthrie, the artistic staff got really upset and felt it was not appropriate to have such a vibrant gift shop in the front, that it took away from what they were doing on stage. Once it became very, very successful, the income from the gift shop was having a huge impact on what could be presented on stage. There are hard balances there.

Zukin: I'm working on a book on shopping and cultures of consumption. Part of what I realized early on is that everything in society has turned into a shopping experience and a shopping opportunity. Of course, I am the kind of person who finds even the slightest gift shop "too crass," but I acknowledge the very real economic benefit that shopping brings to its supporters. But this does raise a very interesting question: Is it possible that culture over the past 20 years—in successful arts districts, and the conflation of arts districts with developments like Inner Harbor (in Baltimore) and Faneuil Hall (in Boston)—has become just another consumer good, and the population at large fails to distinguish anymore between this kind of consumption and arts consumption?

Weeks: I once asked the director of the Dallas Museum of Art why the museum-going experience ranked so highly in popularity. And he said, "Because it's so related to

shopping.” You’re looking at items that you figure you could put in your house. It’s a little different from theater or ballet. You can’t quite take those home.

Pilbrow: Well, as far as we know, Shakespeare was pretty commercial, wasn’t he? They sold oranges during the show, girls with large bosoms walking around selling them, and you could hurl them at the players if you weren’t enjoying yourself. I’m just old enough to remember in the West End of London, when I was a child, if the balcony didn’t enjoy the show, they would yell their disapproval. I’m not sure we shouldn’t be a little more crass.

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Dalto: There’s a museum in Philadelphia that is expecting a rather large contribution from a fast-food chain, and it’s going to incorporate the fast-food name into the name of the museum. Talk about blurring the distinctions between art and commercial!

Weeks: Toward the end of “Cities and Civilizations,” Sir Peter Hall makes some prognostications about the future of cities. It’s a reply to Lewis Mumford’s idea that the city is becoming the necropolis, the city of the dead. Hall felt that we will always have cities. One of the reasons that he cites is the social aspect of culture. This is something cities can provide that the Web cannot. The idea that the Web will somehow eradicate the need to live in cities, that we’ll all stay at home and work on our terminals, he says, is nonsense. Basically, this kind of urban, social experience is something deeply ingrained in humans, in our Western culture, and he doesn’t think it’s ever going to go away.

**Audience Questions**

Question: Is this cultural development filtering down to smaller cities?

Zukin: North Adams, Mass., is one of those small, deindustrialized towns. That town had absolutely no possibility of any economic activity. It was an old failed mill town, and the population was working-class. It’s not far from the rest of the Berkshires, which since the ‘30s have had a number of theater and dance and art-museum activities that have been quite successful, particularly in the summer. But through a series of adventures and misadventures, a very large regional arts complex has been set up. Apparently, it’s been successful beyond my expectations and beyond many people’s expectations. Richard’s



concept of “critical mass” is really important there. Regional cooperation gives a boost to that idea of how to create a critical mass in the area where you live and work.

Lindquist: In the smaller communities where Artspace has done a lot of consulting, there are deals that reflect the size and the mass of those communities. We’re working on one in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. and in a couple of towns in Connecticut. There is a problem with doing a financial deal: The time and effort that you put into creating six units of affordable housing for artists and their families, and the time you put into one for 60, isn’t all that much different. So you have to really figure whether they really can create a sense of why people would want to stay there and not move to the bigger city.

We’re working in Bismarck, N.D. with the American Indian community and the United Tribes Technical College, serving seven Indian nations throughout North Dakota and South Dakota. They are encouraging Artspace to work with them in creating an American Indian home, almost in downtown Bismarck that would encourage the mostly Lakota people there to sell their wares there, whether it’s paintings or jewelry, and not go down to the Southwest where so many of the Lakota people have been going. So again, it’s trying to keep people in their community through relatively modest effort. And the City of Bismarck was wildly enthusiastic.

Weeks: When John and I met with Artspace’s Tom Nordyke, he spoke about Galveston and how a small effort there paid off. We were impressed with that, because Galveston was able to put up only a small sum of money and yet it made a significant difference.

Lindquist: Galveston has a population of about 65,000. It’s an extremely poor city. When the city came up with \$25,000 worth of financing and the county of Galveston came up with a \$165,000 grant to help with the remodeling of this old opera house, that impressed the foundations in Houston so much that they put in about \$1.5 million. Galveston is so poor, compared, for example, to Pittsburgh, where the city put in about \$6 million. So it’s true that sometimes a smaller city that puts in a significant amount of money can just have a huge impact and leverage a lot of private dollars to go ahead and complete the deal.

Question: How much was the City of Philadelphia involved in revitalizing the Society Hill neighborhood?

Dalto: I don’t think there was public funding put into Society Hill. Society Hill was older, actually, it was just the stretch along the river, the original part of Philadelphia. Society Hill gave huge long-term tax incentives to people who renovated houses. So people renovated houses and didn’t have to pay taxes for 10, 15, 20 years. Old City would not exist if it wasn’t for Society Hill, because Society Hill is just bursting at the seams with affluence but with no galleries, few restaurants, no shops; it’s probably 98 percent residential.

Old City definitely did spring up as a response to the needs of Society Hill, and Society Hill's real estate values have risen dramatically over the past 10 years. Old City exists because of the affluence, but actually, Old City received no tax funding whatsoever. We did make some small accommodations to the small-gallery owners for their business taxes and sales taxes; their tax burden was made a lot lighter so they could afford to open these little shoestring galleries. But other than that, there was no direct [city] funding.

Question: At what stage is the Avenue of the Arts now?

Dalto: It still is a battle. I think the business plan for the regional performing-arts center certainly has not satisfied some of our major foundations and has caused them to hold back funding, which has been a major problem for the project. And I'm ashamed to say that the city government of Philadelphia has committed no long-term funding to subsidize the use of the building. Buildings of that size that want to be used by some of the very small resident companies cannot afford the freight. Actually, our orchestra can't.

A city has to make long-term commitments to the subsidization of these major institutions. There is a very small endowment built into the campaign that will really not help to subsidize it to the extent that any of the organizations can use it.

Question: Is there competition between the bigger and smaller arts organizations? Doesn't this kind of development generally benefit only the larger groups?

Weeks: You're talking about a kind of Home Depot effect, where the blockbuster store kills all the little ones.

THE LAST THING THE MAYOR WANTS TO HEAR IS  
THAT YOU'RE SUGGESTING A MODEST ART CENTER.  
HE'D RATHER HAVE A MONUMENT TO HIS REGIME.

Pilbrow: It's a tremendous problem. That's why we try to preach modesty, but we don't always succeed, because the last thing the mayor wants to hear is that you're suggesting a modest art center. He'd rather have a monument to his regime. The second thing we always say is "Building it is easy. Operating it is incredibly difficult." Raising \$100 million is child's play compared to keeping the doors open 365 days a year. So it's a great danger that building a monolith sucks money out of the community.

Weeks: You'd think the value of [nearby] real estate would be somewhat dependent on the continuing success of the arts complex. So you would want to build

in some fund that would help with the continued management of the facility. Do people make plans like that when they're designing these things?

Pilbrow: Not nearly as often as they should.

Question: So much of the development you describe as "reused." You are describing a potential scenario where you might have to face the landlord reusing some of the excess infrastructure. Is it reusable?

Pilbrow: All of these discussions are complicated. I showed slides of old movie palaces, returned into large-scale theaters. They're actually very unsuitable for most theatrical activity, because they're usually too large, and the audience relationship is usually very poor. And they have very little backstage. You can add a [backstage] space and do various things to them, but they're not very suitable. One of the advantages of the horrendous period of the '50s and '60s, when people built these vast barns, is you can actually build a new theater inside them later. We've done three or four of these, where you actually build a whole new theater inside the existing structure. So there is one good side to the grandiosity of the '60s.

**BUILDING IT IS EASY. OPERATING IT IS  
INCREDIBLY DIFFICULT. RAISING \$100 MILLION  
IS CHILD'S PLAY COMPARED TO KEEPING THE  
DOORS OPEN 365 DAYS A YEAR.**

Lindquist: First of all, we create the space so that artists can both create the work in their unit as well as live there. And yet because we use the low-income tax credit a lot, they're paying a quarter of what the market rate would be. So it gives them a chance to focus on their artwork rather than having to work all the time at some non-art function.

If there's enough of those units together to achieve critical mass, then they can do a regular, open-studio night to introduce themselves to a much larger population. In the surveys that we have of our older artist buildings, the artists' incomes have gone up quite dramatically, and more often than not, it is from their artwork, which is being viewed more.